

Senate Bill 274

By: Senators Harp of the 29th and Harbison of the 15th

**AS PASSED SENATE**

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT**

1 To amend an Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August  
2 12, 1915 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983  
3 (Ga. L. 1983, p. 4443), and an Act approved March 28, 1985 (Ga. L. 1985, p. 4593), so as  
4 to provide that municipal court judges shall be elected on a nonpartisan basis; to increase the  
5 jurisdiction of the court in certain cases; to provide for related matters; to provide for an  
6 effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 An Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915  
10 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983 (Ga. L.  
11 1983, p. 4443), is amended by revising Section 4 as follows:

12 "SECTION 4.

13 There shall be a judge, clerk, and marshal of said court and also a deputy clerk or clerks  
14 and a deputy marshal or marshals of said court. The regular term of offices of the judge,  
15 clerk, and marshal of said court shall each be four years, and for such regular term of office  
16 each shall be elected by the qualified voters of Muscogee County quadrennially. The judge  
17 of said court shall be elected on a nonpartisan basis."

18 **SECTION 2.**

19 An Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915  
20 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 28, 1985 (Ga. L.  
21 1985, p. 4593), is amended by revising subsection (a) of Section 3 as follows:

22 "(a) In addition to the matters and things over which said justice courts, justices of the  
23 peace, and notaries public ex officio justices of the peace now have jurisdiction, the said  
24 Municipal Court of Columbus and Muscogee County shall have jurisdiction within the

25 limits of Muscogee County and Columbus, Georgia, concurrent with the Superior Court  
26 of Muscogee County to try and dispose of all civil causes or proceedings, of whatever  
27 nature, whether arising ex contractu or ex delicto, under the common law or by statute, in  
28 which the principal sum sworn to or claimed to be due, or the value of the property in  
29 dispute, does not exceed \$25,000.00 which jurisdiction is not vested by the Constitution  
30 and laws of Georgia exclusively in another or other courts. The criminal jurisdiction of said  
31 municipal court shall be throughout the limits of Muscogee County and Columbus,  
32 Georgia, and shall be the jurisdiction in criminal matters exercised by justices of the peace,  
33 notaries public ex officio justices of the peace, and justice courts, and shall not exceed the  
34 jurisdiction hereafter vested by law in the magistrate courts of this state; except that the  
35 judge of said Municipal Court of Columbus and Muscogee County is empowered and  
36 authorized and given jurisdiction to accept pleas of guilty or nolo contendere and to  
37 impose punishment and penalties provided by law in all cases involving misdemeanors  
38 where preliminary hearing is waived in writing by the accused and a plea of guilty or nolo  
39 contendere entered by the accused in writing. Whenever the words 'principal amount  
40 sworn to or claimed to be due' are used in this Act, it shall be held to mean the principal  
41 amount sued for or the value of the property sued for or claimed or the alleged amount of  
42 liens sought to be enforced by the defendant, setoff, or counterclaim, exclusively of and not  
43 computing interest, hire, attorney's fees, and costs."

44 **SECTION 3.**

45 This Act shall become effective upon approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
46 without such approval.

47 **SECTION 4.**

48 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.